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REP. HENRY BONILLA  
H.R. 629, **TEXAS-MAINE-VERMONT** LOW-LEVEL  
RADIOACTIVE **WASTE** COMPACT

**MR. CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE, H.R  
629, THE TEXAS-MAINE-VERMONT- LOW-LEVEL RADIOACTIVE  
WASTE SITE IS TO BE LOCATED IN MY CONGRESSIONAL  
DISTRICT. WHEN I'M OUT ON THE ROAD IN WEST TEXAS THIS IS  
ONE OF THE BIGGEST ISSUES THAT I HEARABOUT AT TOWN  
HALL MEETINGS.**

**THANK YOU FOR GIVING ME AND MY TWO CONSTITUENTS,  
TERESA TODD AND BILL ADDINGTON THE OPPORTUNITY TO  
DISCUSS OUR CONCERNS WITH THE COMMITTEE.**

**ON MAY 11, 1995, I CAME BEFORE THIS DISTINGUISHED  
COMMITTEE TO DISCUSS THE SAME MATTER. WE ARE BACK  
HERE TODAY BECAUSE THIS HAS BEEN REINTRODUCED  
EVENTHOUGH THE HOUSE VOTED TO REJECT THE EXACT SAME  
LEGISLATION IN SEPTEMBER OF 1995.**

**IT IS DIFFICULT FOR ME TO EXPLAIN TO MY CONSTITUENTS WHY WE ARE ONCE AGAIN CONSIDERING LEGISLATION THAT WAS SO SOUNDLY DEFEATED BY A VOTE OF 243-176 JUST 20 MONTHS AGO. THIS IS ESPECIALLY TRUE BECAUSE NOTHING HAS CHANGED EXCEPT THE GROWING OPPOSITION TO THIS COMPACT IN MY DISTRICT AND THE CONTROVERSY SURROUNDING THE COMPACT IN THE TEXAS LEGISLATURE.**

**WHEN I WAS LAST BEFORE YOU, I ASKED FOR THE COMMITTEE TO MARKUP NEW LEGISLATION TO REPLACE THE 1986 LOW-LEVEL RADIOACTIVE WASTE POLICY AMENDMENT ACT TO PROVIDE FOR GREATER COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT. I ALSO REQUESTED A DETAILED FEDERAL GEOLOGICAL SURVEY BE CONDUCTED IN LIGHT OF THE FACT THAT THIS SITE IS IN A SEISMICALLY ACTIVE REGION. IT IS TROUBLING THAT WE ARE ADDRESSING THE SAME LEGISLATION WITHOUT EVER ANALYZING THE PROBLEM AND POSSIBLE CHANGES.**

**THIS COMPACT IS UNIQUE BECAUSE UNLIKE ANY OF THE OTHER NINE REGIONAL COMPACTS WHICH HAVE GAINED**

**FEDERAL APPROVAL, THE TEXAS-MAINE-VERMONT WASTE SITE WAS CHOSEN IN ADVANCE OF RATIFICATION. ALTHOUGH THE SITE IS NOT A PART OF THE FEDERAL LEGISLATION BEFORE US, IT IS TOO CLOSELY TIED TO IGNORE.**

**MR. CHAIRMAN, I AM HERE REPRESENTING THE PEOPLE OF FAR WEST TEXAS, THE MAJORITY OF WHO ARE POOR AND OF MINORITY POPULATIONS AND WHO DO NOT HAVE A SEAT AT THIS TABLE TO EXPRESS THE SIGNIFICANT IMPACT OUR ACTIONS WILL HAVE ON THEIR LIVES.**

**MANY HAVE SENT ME LETTERS AND HUNDREDS MORE HAVE SIGNED PETITIONS AGAINST THIS LEGISLATION, SUCH AS DR. ALFREDO GUTERREZ FORMER MAYOR OF CITY OF DEL RIO. RESOLUTIONS OPPOSING THE COMPACT HAVE BEEN PASSED IN 19 CITIES AND COUNTIES, INCLUDING SEVEN OF THE 29 COUNTIES I REPRESENT. THESE PEOPLE CANNOT BE DISREGARDED. THEIR FEARS AND CONCERNS DESERVE TO BE HEARD ON THE FEDERAL LEVEL.**

**AS I HAVE POINTED OUT BEFORE, SEVEN YEARS PRIOR TO MY ELECTION TO SERVE IN THIS BODY, CONGRESS PASSED THE LOW-LEVEL RADIOACTIVE WASTE POLICY AMENDMENT ACT. I BELIEVE THAT ACT IS SIGNIFICANTLY FLAWED BECAUSE IT DOES NOT PROVIDE FOR COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT ON THE FEDERAL LEVEL BEFORE WASTE COMPACTS ARE CONSIDERED.**

**WE ARE ALL AWARE OF THE FEDERAL CIRCUIT COURT RULING, BASED ON INTERSTATE COMMERCE LAW, WHICH REQUIRES STATES TO ACCEPT THE LOW-LEVEL WASTE OF OTHER STATES. HOWEVER, I MUST REITERATE WHAT I HAVE SAID IN THE PAST: RADIOACTIVE WASTE COMMERCE CANNOT BE CONSIDERED IN THE SAME LIGHT AS OTHER INTERSTATE COMMERCE.**

**CONGRESS RECOGNIZED THIS IN 1986 WHEN IT PASSED LEGISLATION WHICH PROVIDED A MEANS FOR RESTRICTING THIS FORM OF COMMERCE BETWEEN STATES. THE TEXAS-VERMONT-MAINE COMPACT HAS THE BENEFIT OF LIMITING WASTE SHIPMENTS TO THOSE THREE STATES.**

**HOWEVER, SERIOUS PROBLEMS REMAIN WITH THIS COMPACT. IF THIS LEGISLATION IS APPROVED TODAY, MY CONSTITUENTS OPPOSING THE COMPACT FEAR THAT THE COMMISSION ESTABLISHED BY THE COMPACT WILL HAVE THE AUTHORITY TO OPEN THE HUDSPETH SITE TO WASTE FROM STATES OTHER THAN TEXAS, MAINE AND VERMONT IN THE FUTURE.**

**THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT SOME OF MY CONSTITUENTS SUPPORT THE COMPACT BECAUSE OF THE SHORT TERM ECONOMIC BENEFITS TO ONE COUNTY. HOWEVER, THE OVERWHELMING MAJORITY IN FAR WEST TEXAS REMAIN OPPOSED. MANY BECAUSE OF THE ADVERSE FINANCIAL IMPACT THE DUMP SITE WILL HAVE ON THEIR LOCAL ECONOMIES.**

**MR. CHAIRMAN, I WOULD LIKE TO SUBMIT FOR THE RECORD AN ARTICLE WHICH APPEARED IN THE TEXAS MONTHLY MAGAZINE FEATURING JUDGE JAKE BRISBIN AND PRESIDIO COUNTY ATTORNEY TERESA TODD WHO IS HERE WITH US TODAY. THE ARTICLE IS CALLED 'DUMPED ON' AND FRANKLY**

**THAT IS HOW MANY OF MY CONSTITUENTS FEEL. THIS ARTICLE SHEDS LIGHT ON THE ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES THE COMPACT WILL HAVE ON MANY SURROUNDING COUNTIES WHICH SUFFER UNEMPLOYMENT RATES HIGHER THAN 30 PERCENT.**

**IT IS SO IMPORTANT THAT YOU UNDERSTAND THAT MY CONSTITUENTS WILL BE FORCED TO ACCEPT THIS WASTE WITHOUT RECOURSE. EVERY AMERICAN COMMUNITY DESERVES TO BE GIVEN AN OPPORTUNITY TO PARTICIPATE IN THE PROCESS ESPECIALLY WHEN EXPECTED TO ACCEPT SOMETHING OF THIS MAGNITUDE.**

**DURING THE NEXT PANEL YOU WILL HEAR FROM MY CONSTITUENTS, TERESA TODD AND BILL ADDINGTON, WHO WILL DISCUSS THE CONTROVERSY SURROUNDING THIS ISSUE ON THE STATE LEVEL, THE POTENTIALLY HARMFUL ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES ON A PREDOMINATELY POOR REGION, THE INTERNATIONAL IMPLICATIONS, AND THE NEED FOR FEDERAL SAFEGUARDS.**

**MR. CHAIRMAN AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS, THANK YOU  
ONCE AGAIN FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO REPRESENT MY  
CONSTITUENTS IN THIS MATTER.**